

COMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL
WEDNESDAY, April 21, 2021 at 6:00 P.M.
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Voting Members present: Chair Joanne Campbell, Alderman Michael Concannon, Alderman Robert Ferullo, Alderman Jeffrey Dillon, Alderman Darlene Mercer-Bruen, Alderman Joseph Demers, President Edward Tedesco.

Absent: Alderman Richard Gately

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Chairman Campbell opened the meeting stating that there were three (3) candidates that we will interviewing today Carol Moore, James Blatchford and Lindsay Higgins, that I will ask them the same six questions. First one is Carol Moore from Woodinville, Washington.

Questioning #1: Please tell us about your education and experience and why it makes you a good candidate for the City Clerk position. Carol stated that it has been her life long career, that she worked as a jury clerk and learned how to deal with people, that you must be able to communicate with people. That she has a Master's Degree of Public Policy and Management, Bachelor of Arts Degree, majoring in history. I lived 9 years in Florida am originally from Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. I worked in the county clerk's office that laid the foundation of great habits during that time. We transitioned from paper filing to scanning and digital recording, all under state mandates regarding time-sensitive rules. I could not get my foot in the door so when the opportunity came available in Washington State I moved. I learned the budgets of seven communities, that I wanted to go back to city government. Question #2: Please describe your ideas of what the public should expect from the City Clerk and the City Clerk's office. Carol stated that the primary role of a City Clerk is to provide customer service, internally as the record keeper of council actions, preparation of agendas, and the records manager. Externally communication working with the public on project, advisor with other department by giving advice, to be a source of information for the public, an advisory role in how to work the front counter with all kinds of people and issues. Question #3: What do you believe to be the three most important attributes a City Clerk must possess. Carol stated that being organized working day to day, be patient with the public, helping people to work with people being able to help with questions or be able to send them in the right direction and keep personnel opinions to yourself. Question #4: Describe your experience as a supervisor and manager and what do you consider your strengths. Carol stated that facilitation to help the staff to do their job efficiently and give them the tools and training to do their job, to have professional development an open door policy to grow by learning other roles in the department to help the office run smoothly. Question #5: Describe your experience with preparing and managing budgets. Carol stated that during her time working with the courts as financial director that you have to look at what previous year was and what they would need in the future, that spreadsheets, vouchers, working budget drafts the importance of communication with the Mayor and auditors to keep up on the budget.

Question #6: why should we select you for the next City Clerk? Caro; stated that I work on my work at the time I received it I don't put it off until later, that if the work load is much or hard for one person we shift the duties so that it makes it easier. With the public you have to take the information and get back to them, have patients and listen to what they have to say and have patients with co-workers. When we are working I am always asking questions on how to communicate issues. I am a dedicated worker, hard worker and a great team player. Alderman Mercer-Bruen ask what is the population of your current town? Carol similar to Woburn about 22,000 people. Alderman Lannan asked why Woburn? Carol stated that all her family is on the east coast, that she was original from Pennsylvania and that they would like to come back to the east coast. I would like to come back to New England I like the season changes, that I have learned a lot about elections currently in Washington all voting is mail in. Alderman Dillon asked what is the most difficult part of the job to overcome? Carol stated that getting people on board with new technology, that a lot of paper is used, that we need to move forward with the public record system. It is hard to get people back into technology, that having hybrid meetings with still having face to face meetings. Chairman Campbell thanked Carol Moore and explain the next step in the process and that she will be notified.

Chairman Campbell stated that the next person is James Blatchford, Haverhill, Massachusetts.

Question #1: Please tell us about your education and experience and why it makes you a good candidate for the City Clerk position. James stated that he previously worked at the stated house, that he is currently Haverhill Assistant City Clerk working toward my masters at UMass Dartmouth. Question #2: Please describe your ideas of what the public should expect from the City Clerk and the City Clerk's office. James stated that the city clerk's office is one of the most if not the busiest office it is people helping people. When it comes to elections we are the record keeper of the city, that we want people to be able to trust us, that their information is secure. Conflict with citizens, working with the Council I get the complaints but the Council gets the backlash. Communication is important that a lot of people want to be listened too that no one should turned away listen to them and direct them in the right direction on what they need and what they need to do or give them a shorter way to address the issue. Explain what happened and how it is to be address it in the future. Question #4: What do you believe to be the three most important attributes a City Clerk must possess. Origination, be detail orientated be prepared things happening at all times and up to date with all the new laws. Customer Service is important that the public, that they should leave the office satisfied with the answers they received and to be as helpful as you can. Being able to be open to new changes. Questions#5: Describe you experience with preparing and managing budgets. James stated that everything the clerk knows is what I know, we worked yearly on budgets to make sure that if one item didn't have enough budgeted we increased it and the same is one item has too much make the adjustment but make sure your budget is going to get you through the year. Questions #6: James stated that I love my job, that I love the history of elections and getting to do it every day going to work and really liking what I do. Alderman Dillon ask what is the biggest obstacle you have had? James stated that I didn't have the experience in liquor licenses, that I had a crash course in learning I make sure even if I know something is done correctly I still double check it. Thank you! I love my job and would love to work in the City of Woburn. Chairman Campbell thanked James Blatchford and explain the next step in the process and that he will be notified.

Chairman Campbell stated that the next person is Lindsay E. Higgins, Woburn, Massachusetts.

Question #1: Please tell us about your education and experience and why it makes you a good candidate for the City Clerks position. Lindsay Higgins stated that she has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science, Juris doctor (law degree) and passed that state bar in November 2011, that she always wanted to be a lawyer, that she loves election law at Umass Amherst and studied local laws. Currently a tax and business attorney doing legal research, that she used Woburn as an example on laws. Question #2: Please describe your ideas of what the public should expect from the city clerks and the city clerk's office. Lindsay stated that the clerk's office is the face of the city, the heart of the city for birth, death and marriages that are provided, that you can register to vote and interact with the office. City hall has been open through the pandemic to help serve the community. Question #3: What do you believe to be the three most important attributes a city Clerk must possess. Lindsay stated that discretion, decorum, trust the office, continuity, and having someone experienced in the office. Question #4: Please describe your experience as a supervisor and manager. Lindsay state that she does all the work of managing people, that you have to collaborate a lot with everyone, that the community trust and respect the office employees. Question #5: Describe your experience with preparing and managing budgets. Lindsay stated that she has done state budgets in appropriation budgets and have been through the process being on the City Council. Questions #6: How would you handle a conflict with a staff member? How would you handle a conflict with a citizen? Lindsay stated that she has taken classes on the issue, that listening is important to hear what is being said. I have had my share of listening to my constituents, that communication is helpful answering questions. Question #7: Why should we select you for the City Clerk? Lindsay stated that she is the only registered voter, that she has lived in the city of Woburn all her life and that being on the City Council has given me a step up, that I can take note and I know the city and all the players. Alderman Dillon asked what is the biggest obstacle you have had? Lindsay stated that my present job has been the most difficult obstacle that I have been berated, that they opposed what I thought but you need to be persistent. Chairman Campbell thanked Lindsay Higgins and explain the next step in the process and that she will be notified.

Motion made and 2nd to take a five-minute recess, all in favor 8-1 (Gately Absent).

Motion made and 2nd to return to the regular order of business, all in favor 8-1 (Gately absent).

Chairman Campbell stated that per rule 34 of the city council no more than 2 candidates can be sent back for action. Alderman Mercer-Bruen stated that Carol Moore stated that she has put proposals together, that is a red flag, that she did have many positive things, that the city clerk is a voting member of the Board of Registrars and must be a registered voter. Alderman Concannon stated that all the candidates know that they have to become residents of Woburn and a registered voter by August 3, 2021. All three candidates have qualified experience and the skill set to do the job. Lindsay rose above the others being a lifelong resident, that she knows what to expect with the city council which would make it an easier transition. President Tedesco stated that Miss Moore had a good interview, but the review of the hybrid of meetings we need to come back after the pandemic, that we need to get back to real meeting, that Lindsay is one step ahead. Alderman Dillon stated that all three candidates did a good job, but what if they moved here and could not find a place to live, that the rents are sky high and houses are selling before they hit the market, that I don't want to have to go through the process again in November. Alderman Mercer-Bruen stated that Lindsay would be a wonderful asset to the position, that she knows the needs of the City Council. Motion made and 2nd to nominate Lindsay E. Higgins for the position of City Clerk, all in favor 8-0 (Gately absent).

Motion made and 2nd to AJOURN, all in favor 8-0 (Gately Absent), Meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

TRUE ATTEST COPY:

Joyce M. Gray
Acting City Clerk
and Clerk of the City Council Pro Tem